

INTO THE FRAY, WITH THE BOOK OF TRUTH AND LOVE

God, Man, Woman

Genesis 1:1

INTRODUCTION

In Paris this past week, there was trouble at Euro-Disney as a little boy was denied the Disney Princess experience. This is where little girls experience being made up as a Disney princess character. The mother was outraged, not being able to understand why her son would be discriminated in this way. Disney quickly back-peddled, allowing not only her son, but any little boy who wants to be made up as a princess.

Four in 10 babies born in America are born to unmarried mothers. The vast majority of them will grow up with minimal influence of a father. These children will learn to view themselves as a mom teaches them, absent what a Dad would teach. This is not for lack of contraception, either. The stats prove that the more abortions there are and the more that contraception is made easy to get, the greater the number of women having babies apart from wedlock.

Boy Scouts in America have been torn apart by controversies surrounding their demands for heterosexuality among their leaders. Girl Scouts lead the way by proudly accepting little boys who claim to be girls.

Government-based discrimination against Christians on the basis of their stance against abortion is built into the Affordable Health Care Act. This summer, the state of Oregon passed a bill, 3391-B, requiring all insurance companies to pay for all abortions, no matter what the reason, thus providing free abortions for all. This also leads to more discrimination against Christians who may not agree with selling such policies, or Christian employees who might not agree with buying such policies. They will do it, or be violators of the law. The Governor, Kate Brown, claims that all who oppose this legislation are involved in “an attack on all Oregonians.”

Marriage has been redefined to include men marrying men, women marrying women. Without question, we can expect marriage to expand to people seeking to marry numerous people at once, or marry close relatives, or even pets. Such things, once unthinkable, are now inevitable.

A man at Google was fired for suggesting in a memo that the difficulty in finding women to work as programmers might suggest that they ought not to try to have equal numbers of men and women doing the job. John McEnroe came under fire for saying that Serena Williams was the greatest women’s tennis player, instead of just the greatest tennis player. He responded that she wouldn’t even be competitive against the men. This was seen as a great insult.

The language we use is being forced into new forms in order to conform to an ever-changing definition of male and female. Many universities now require incoming students to choose which pronouns they will apply to themselves –He, She, Xe, etc.

A guide to gender-inclusive pronouns

Pronoun	Conjugation	How to use it
Ne	Ne, nem, nir, nirs, nerself	I am good friends with nir.
Ze/Hir	Ze, hir, hir, hirs, hirself	Ze likes to go to the beach.
Ze/Zir	Ze, zir, zir, zirs, ze	I asked zir to go to the movies.
Spivak	Ey, em, eir, eirs, ey	That car is eirs.
Ve	Ve, ver, vis, vis, verself	Vis hair is brown.
Xe	Xe, xem, xyr, xyrs, xe	Xe lives in the yellow house.

Editor's note: While the pronouns above are among the more commonly used, more non-binary pronouns exist.

As for the world we live in, the human is the least valued of all creatures. While snale darters have been able to hold up building projects, minnows have been able to stop the flow of water to California farmers, and while people have gone to jail for disturbing the eggs of eagles or draining a swamp on their own land, human babies are killed in abortion by the 100,000's.

Christians are also finding themselves discriminated against in adoption. In many states, Christian adoption agencies, like Catholic services, are shut down because they will not place children with homosexual couples. In fact, any Christian expression of human sexuality from a biblical point of view is ridiculed and set aside.

In all these things, we must ask, "What is the unifying thread? What do all these scenarios have in common?"

The answer is that all show a lack of a unifying definition of what it means to be human.

What does it mean to be human? Male? Female? Sexual? Family? Father? Mother? Boy? Girl?

The confusion surrounding us comes from the worldview of a nation that has cut itself free of God.

In the culture we find ourselves in, sexual morality is viewed as an autonomous choice. As long as it doesn't involve children, and it does involve consent, each person has the right to define sexual morality. Each person also has the right to define what it means to be male and female. No person has the right to tell others they are wrong on this matter. Each person has the right to define himself or herself.

Individual autonomy, self-rule, is the rule of the day. Each person is a government unto himself, making whatever laws he desires, defining reality how he likes.

No God outside of man has a right to intrude. Man has evolved from nothing and is cut off from gods, unless they are ones he invents for himself. And so, we see man doing what is right in his own eyes, and it is wicked.

This is the society we live in. What are we, as Christians, to do about that? The answer is two-fold. 1. We are to hold fast to the truth. 2. We are to interact with the society around us with

love. This series of sermons is purposely meant to educate Christians on what the Bible says regarding what it means to be human, and how to teach the truth in love.

This first sermon sets the foundation on which all the rest of the sermons are built. That foundation is found in our main text for today: Genesis 1:1

TEXT: GENESIS 1:1

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The Maker of a thing defines that thing. He has the right, for He has made it. In the beginning, when all matter started, God was already there. He made the heavens and the earth. He made all that is in them also. There were no worlds, no suns, and no stars. He made them.

On this earth, there was no sky. He made it. There were no seas, He made them. There was no land, He made it. There were no trees, no plants, no flowers, no fruits, and no vegetables. He made them. There were not bugs, no spiders, no ants, no dragon flies, no lady bugs, no bees, and no fire flies. He made them all. There were no fish, no quid, no whales, no dolphins, no sharks, no seals, no choral, no sponge, no jellyfish, no sea weed, no clown fish, no schools of grouper, no salmon, no tuna, no marlins, no crabs or lobsters, nothing! He made them all. There were no turtles, no frogs, no lizards, no snakes, no worms, no bats, no mice, and no rats. He made them all. There were not kittens, puppies, zebras, elephants, lions, tigers, bears (oh my!), or Meer cats, hippos, rhinos, buffalos, horses, cows or oxen. He made them all. There were not birds, no blue jays, no blue birds, no cardinals, no starlings, no crows, no seagulls, no eagles, owls, hawks, falcons, no parrots, cockatiels, parakeets, woodpeckers, turkeys, partridges, doves, pigeons, pheasant, chickens, Guiney hens, or ostriches. He made them all. There was no grand canyon, there were no great mountain peaks, and there were no great trenches in the sea. He made them all. Finally, there were no human beings, until, He said, "Let us make man, in our own image."

(Today, people take exception to that language. Why did God say, "Let us make man?" Why not, "Let us make humanity?" The answer is, because He made it, He can name it).

The Maker of a thing defines that thing. He has the right, for He has made it.

He made everything, therefore, everything is what He says it is, including mankind and including male and female. Human beings, made by God, do not have the right to identify themselves as anything except what He identifies them as. As the Scripture says to rebellious man-kind:

16 You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (Isa 29:16 ESV)

As we continue in this sermon series, our goal is to discover what God says about mankind, about male and female, about mother and father, about son and daughter, about marriage and singleness, and about sexual morality. We take as our source of truth, the Bible, the much revealed Word of God.

As for you, you live in this world. I am challenging you to take your stand with God, no matter what He says. I urge you to **trust Him, even when what He says goes against your culture. Why? Because His is good. His ways lead to happiness, wisdom, liberation, and fulfilling human thriving. Going against His ways leads us to the unhappy, angry, unsatisfied mess that you see around you in this world.**

You will either believe that we are what God says, or you will believe we are what you decide.

You might say, “Well, of course we will all be on God’s side, right?” No. Wrong. When the dominant culture surrounding the church clashes with the ways of God, a large portion of Christians remain quiet or sell out to the world. This is the historical pattern. We see it best in American history with the acceptance of slavery, and later with segregation in the American South. I am not shocked by human slavery because humans are wicked. They do wicked things. What shocks me when I read history is how few white Christians were willing to risk their lives to change it and how few Christian preachers shouted regularly against slavery! (some did, but most did not).

You say, “Well, if I lived then, I would have been different.” Really? It is easy to be brave in the hypothetical world of going back in time. It is another thing to be brave in your own times. The reality is a percentage of Christians choose to sell out to the culture, condemning other Christians who don’t. Another percentage, perhaps the largest, chooses to simply stay silent; and the minority stands loudly on the truth of God.

It is the conviction of many pastors, over these last 45 years, to not preach about abortion, but simply to skirt the issue. They think that it is best to simply preach the Gospel, rationalizing that they are changing hearts and minds. Likewise, most pastors said nothing when they disagreed with the trend towards unbiblical arrangements of male and female in the church and family. Then, they are shocked when whole churches determine that gay marriage is God’s good plan. They had no voice when it might have made waves, but are shocked to inherit the fruit of their silence.

Even today, you see this trend. Survey churches across the country. You will find most people ignoring the controversies created by the twisted thinking of our godless society. You will find a sizable minority selling out to unbiblical thinking and claiming that all other Christians are hateful. But there are some who will take a stand.

I’m inviting you to go against your culture for the sake of the Word of God. You will be called outdated and old-fashioned, but God’s ways never go out of date. When all this world’s current and modern trends are dust in the wind of the past, only God’s ways will remain.

I’m inviting you to be misunderstood for Christ’s sake, to love when you are hated, to be called stupid, backward, mean, and unintelligent, and to smile back and stand on the truth of the love of God.

Here is how the world will speak of you: *We’ve chosen to use our sacred text; not to bring comfort or create unity or engender hope—but to beat the hell out of people who spend much of their*

days already walking through hell because of the cruelty of our disciples. We've chosen to wage cheap war on innocent and vulnerable people in order to feel mighty again. (John Pavlovitz, "Stuff that Needs to be Said," blog).

Is that fair? No. Will you stand with Jesus and love the person who says that of you? Because getting the truth right includes the truth that we are here to love people. You see, God not only defines the world, but He loves it too.

TEXT: JOHN 3:16-17

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The same God whose ways we will be examining over the next few months is the God who paid the highest price so that all of us sinners can be saved. He did not come to condemn the world, nor should we. We should seek out those who hate us most, and invite them to dinner, listen to them, love them, and, with wisdom, tell them the truth of Jesus's love for them.

We are to speak the truth in love. We are not to tell people what they want to hear, but what God says they need to hear.

Who is here today who has yet to have his or her sins forgiven by receiving Jesus as his or her Savior?